

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of Claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

(a) at a first point in time, causing at least one processor of a wagering game device to execute a plurality of instructions to:

(i) determine a current time; and

(ii) determine a reference time, wherein, at the first point in time, the determined reference time is different than the determined current time;

(b) at a second, different point in time, causing the at least one processor to execute the plurality of instructions to:

(i) determine that the second point in time has a predetermined relationship to the determined reference time; and

(ii) in response to the determination that the second point in time has the predetermined relationship to the determined reference time, cause at least one display device to display a first play of a bonus game, said first play of the bonus game being displayed distinct and independent from any outcome being generated during any play of any game and said first play of the bonus game having a first average expected payout which is based, at least in part, on the second point in time having the predetermined relationship to the determined reference time; and

(c) at a third, different point in time, causing the at least one processor to execute the plurality of instructions to:

(i) determine that a triggering event has occurred, the triggering event occurring independent of the third point in time; and

(ii) cause the at least one display device to display a second, different play of the bonus game, said second, different play of the bonus game having a second, different average expected payout.

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein determining a reference time includes determining a beginning of a next hour.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein determining a reference time includes determining a time that is a predetermined number of minutes before a beginning of a next hour.

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, which includes determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion, wherein the display of said first play of said bonus game is based, at least in part, on the player satisfying the at least one criterion.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion includes determining whether the player has made a specified number of handle pulls at the wagering game device.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion includes determining whether the player has made a specified number of handle pulls at the wagering game device within a time interval beginning a specified period of time prior to the determined reference time, and ending with the determined reference time.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method of claim 8, wherein determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion includes determining whether the player has made a specified number of handle pulls at the wagering game device within a time interval beginning one hour prior to the determined reference time, and ending with the determined reference time.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion includes determining whether the player has wagered, at the wagering game device, an amount of currency whose aggregate value is at least a specified value, within a time interval beginning a specified period of time prior to the determined reference time, and ending with the determined reference time.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion includes determining whether the player has paid, in taxes to the wagering game device, an amount of currency whose aggregate value is at least a specified value, within a time interval beginning a specified period of time prior to the determined reference time, and ending with the determined reference time.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion includes determining whether the player has maintained a specified average rate of play at the wagering game device within a time interval beginning a specified period of time prior to the determined reference time, and ending with the determined reference time.

Claim 13 (canceled).

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein determining whether a player has satisfied at least one criterion includes determining whether the player has paid a fee to the wagering game device in exchange for insurance that the player will be provided entry into said first play of the bonus game.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): A method comprising:
determining a reference time;
receiving, from a player, a quantity of wagers whose aggregate value meets or exceeds a specified value;
determining, deterministically, a type of bonus game; and
providing entry into the bonus game in temporal proximity to the reference time.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The method of claim 15,
wherein determining a reference time includes determining, deterministically, a reference time.

Claims 17 to 18 (canceled).

Claim 19 (withdrawn): A method comprising:
directing a first gaming device to provide, at a specified time, entry into a first bonus game; and
directing a second gaming device to provide, at the specified time, entry into a second bonus game.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): A method comprising:
determining a specified time deterministically;
directing a first gaming device to provide entry into a bonus game at the specified time; and
directing a second gaming device to provide entry into the bonus game at the specified time.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): A method comprising:
determining a bonus game for a first gaming device;
determining, independently of determining the first bonus game, a second bonus game for a second gaming device;
directing the first gaming device to provide entry into the first bonus game at a specified time; and
directing the second gaming device to provide entry into the second bonus game at the specified time.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A method comprising:
generating an outcome;
determining a payout associated with the outcome;
apportioning the payout into a first payment and a second payment;
providing, at a first time, the first payment; and
applying, at a second time, the second payment toward a cost to play a bonus game.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): The method of claim 22,
wherein providing, at a first time, includes providing, at a first time that has been determined randomly, the first payment; and
wherein applying, at a second time, includes applying, at a second time that has been determined deterministically, the second payment.

Claim 24 (withdrawn): The method of 22,
wherein apportioning includes apportioning, based on a predetermined percentage, the payout amount into a first payment and a second payment.

Claim 25 (withdrawn): A method comprising:
determining a first time;
determining a second time; and
initiating, based on the first time matching the second time, play of a bonus game.

Claim 26 (withdrawn): A system comprising:
a processor;
a memory coupled to the processor; and
a program stored in the memory including instructions operable to:
 determine a first time;
 determine a second time; and
 provide, based on the first time matching the second time, entry into a bonus game of a gaming device.

Claim 27 (withdrawn): The system of claim 26,
wherein the program further includes instructions to:
 determine a reference time;
 determine a current time; and
 provide, based on the first time matching the second time, entry into the bonus game.

Claim 28 (withdrawn): The system of claim 26,
wherein the program further includes instructions to:
 determine a beginning of a next hour.

Claim 29 (withdrawn): The system of claim 26,
wherein the program further includes instructions to:
 determine a time that is a predetermined number of minutes before a beginning of a next hour.

Claim 30 (withdrawn): The system of claim 26,
wherein the program further includes instructions to:
 determine a type of the bonus round deterministically.

Claim 31 (withdrawn): A system comprising:
a processor;
a memory coupled to the processor; and
a program stored in the memory including instructions operable to:
 determine a first time;
 determine a second time; and
 initiate, based on the first time matching the second time, play of a bonus
game.

Claim 32 (withdrawn): A method comprising:

- determining a reference time;
- determining a current time;
- determining whether a player of a gaming device has satisfied at least one criterion;
- determining a type of bonus game deterministically and independently of any prior outcomes generated by the gaming device; and
- providing, based on the first time matching the second time and the determining whether a player of a gaming device has satisfied at least one criterion, entry into the bonus game at the gaming device,
- wherein determining a reference time includes determining a time that is a predetermined number of minutes before or after a beginning of a next hour,
- wherein the at least one criterion includes the player has paid, in taxes to the gaming device, an amount of currency whose aggregate value equals or exceeds a specified value, within a time interval beginning a specified period of time prior to the reference time, and ending with the reference time, and
- wherein the at least one criterion further includes the player is present at the gaming device at the reference time.

Claim 33 to 34 (canceled).